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DEPT FOR AF/E AND A/S FRAZER

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TAGS: PTER ASEC MOPS SO ET UG

SUBJECT: Somali Clan Warfare Threatens Reconciliation

Classified by PolOff John O'Leary. 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (C) An analysis of the Mogadishu neighborhoods in which yesterday's fighting occurred (3/21) indicates that the armed Hawiye opposition to the TFG has expanded from primarily the Ayr sub-clan to a variety of sub clans from the Hawiye/Habr Gidr (including the Saad and Duduble) and the Abgal sub-clan, particularly the Warsangeli. (The Warsangeli are Prime Minister Gedi's sub-clan, though many reportedly view Gedi as a tool of the Ethiopians.) There were also reports this morning (3/22) that Hawiye/Suleiman militia south of the central Somali town of Galkayo had clashed with Darod/Majerteen clan militia moving from Puntland to Mogadishu to reinforce TFG forces. (President Yusuf hails from the Darod/Majerteen.)

¶2. (U) Contacts in Mogadishu reported renewed clashes this morning in some neighborhoods, though on a reduced scale from yesterday.

¶3. (C) The Somali Ambassador to Kenya confirmed to us this morning that the Prime Minister's office had distributed leaflets last night (3/21-22) warning the residents of northern neighborhoods (primarily populated by the Habr Gedir/Ayr) to evacuate in order to avoid becoming casualties. A media contact in Mogadishu told us that an "Ethiopian artillery battalion" had arrived on the outskirts of the city last evening. Mogadishu contacts informed us that they had seen large numbers of Ethiopian troops and armor moving toward the city's outskirts early today.

¶4. (C) Ambassador Ranneberger has placed a call to President Yusuf to try to dissuade the TFG from any precipitous action on the part of the TFG or the Ethiopians. The European Commission office in Nairobi also reportedly is asking its headquarters in Brussels to contact President Yusuf to ascertain his intentions pertaining to reconciliation and the current fighting. EC officials here also reportedly want their HQ to urge restraint in the TFG's response to yesterday's clash.

¶5. (C) Comment. It does not appear that Ugandan forces have been targeted or otherwise involved in the recent fighting. Although the radical Islamists have exploited and manipulated the current situation to the point of a breakdown in the reconciliation process, they do not seem to be driving the current clashes. Considerable numbers of Somalis now appear to see the present conflict in clan versus clan terms rather than TFG versus Islamists. If conflict in Mogadishu has now solidified into an inter-clan conflict, then the prospects for a successful reconciliation process may be significantly reduced. If the Ethiopians attack densely populated Hawiye neighborhoods in Mogadishu, reconciliation may be postponed indefinitely. End comment.

Ranneberger